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221 796 time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose [774 624] grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga [769] dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the [769] Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room [182] with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

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177 241 specially trained non-Mossi personnel, the use of irrigation, fertilizer, and the plow are their most important technological innovations. Despite their difficulty in communicating with the European agronomists under whose direction they work, they soon master these agricultural techniques. Patterns of consumption are also altered, rice taking the [261] place of millet as the staple in their diet. After some initial illness they become accustomed to rice but suspect that it is less nourishing than their traditional diet.

177 182 Far more difficult than adjusting to either the new technology or the diet is adaptation to the changed social organization. Trying to ease this adjustment but with an imperfect understanding of traditional Mossi institutions, the project administration has tried to re-create their forms in the area of resettlement.

Despite this, the new colonist finds himself isolated among social forces he does not understand. The attempt to reproduce the traditional pattern of residential grouping is meaningless in the absence of the lineage. Separated from his kinsmen and his community, the colonist is confused by social institutions whose resemblance to those he has known in the Yatenga exists only on the level of form. He does not like or understand being housed with strangers as if they were his kinsmen. Equally incomprehensible is an approximation of the familiar political organization which, ignoring the traditional sanctions of chieftainship, has a former earth custodian, whose supernatural role has traditionally precluded the exercise of political authority, as paramount chief.

Despite the efforts of the European administration to reproduce their structural appearance, the institutions of Mossi society are so interrelated that the change in the organization of economic activity has created new needs which make alterations in traditional institutions inevitable. Rather than permitting the colonists to modify their indigenous social organization to fit these new needs, the social structure rigidly imposed by the Europeans has impeded the Mossi in their efforts to adjust their institutions to the changed situation. The delegation of authority to inept administrative appointees thinly disguised as chiefs and to the older, least adaptive members of the settler communities only complicates the problem of adjustment.

Isolated from their kinsmen and the protection of their ancestral spirits, the colonists miss the emotional and social satisfactions of extended family living as well as the security of an established position in the community in which they were born. Adherence to the traditional kinship organization, with its emphasis on obedience to the elders who [582] have remained behind in the Yatenga, makes marriage at the Niger project almost impossible.

The young men born and raised at the project resent the tradition

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which requires sharing and compliance with the authority of kinsmen in the Yatenga whom they have never known. Forced to return to the Yatenga to assist the extended family there, they are frustrated in their efforts to form a permanent identification with their residence at the irrigation project. More efficient than their elders in communicating with the Europeans and in learning their techniques, they are thwarted by a social organization which denies expression to their initiative. The older men, given no share in the administration of the project and with little understanding of its objectives, believe that they are being exploited by the Europeans and that they would be more successful if they were to follow their own system of production and marketing.

The Mossi have learned that the official policy of the Niger Irrigation Project specifies their participation in administration through "indigenous agricultural associations," and even through their "collaboration" within the board of directors; but they do not actually participate in either of these. Possibly the fact that the Mossi have had no previous experience of participation in democratic forms discouraged the Europeans in their early efforts to include them in the administration of the project, but such participation implies a profound cultural adjustment and would require patience on the part of the Europeans. Whatever the case, the fact that the colonists know they have a right to participate in the administration and yet are denied it only serves to increase their conviction that they are being exploited.

Unsure of their rights to the land, unaware of the goals of the project, and inhibited by their artificially maintained tradition from forming meaningful social relationships in the area of resettlement, the Mossi make little permanent identification with the Niger project and its objectives. They say that it is like the hut a man builds in his fields during the rainy season; when the crop is harvested, he will return to the house of his fathers.

The relatively rapid and easy adaptation to the new natural setting and the supernatural forces which govern it is probably due both to the lack of European interference in this aspect of the colonists' lives and to the traditional permissiveness of West African religions. On the other hand, the greatest obstacle to adjustment seems to be just that aspect of the changed situation which was designed to facilitate it: the reconstruction and artificial maintenance of a social structure which cannot be efficiently integrated with the new economic organization. This structure has been maintained with such rigidity that it actually impedes Mossi efforts to reinterpret their institutions in terms of their new situation.

The Mossi who have returned from the Niger project have had little effect on their kinsmen in the Yatenga. Islamized colonists are often

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177 too young to be listened to seriously by their elders. If they are returning as senior members of their lineages, and since their power and prestige
● 182 are dependent on the maintenance of the socio-religious status quo, they
561 are unlikely to be innovators. For these same reasons the few changes in the social organization which have occurred at the Niger project have had little effect on the social environment of the Yatenga.

177 Most of the agricultural techniques acquired in the Sudan are useless in the Yatenga because of the absence of irrigation. Even were this not
241 so, the rationale of the modern agricultural methods employed at the Niger project is not explained to the settlers; they are required to follow the instructions of the European agronomists or be penalized. As a result, the improved agricultural techniques of the Europeans are regarded as just another of the white man's incomprehensible ways and are quickly forgotten.

177 The response of the Mossi to resettlement at the Niger Irrigation Project shows that in a situation of rapid cultural change, retentions or
182 changes on the superficial level of form are misleading; nor is a brief statement of the functional interrelationship between institutions sufficient. The final reality of an institution lies in its meaning for the members of the society in which it exists, and its final evaluation must be based on its capacity to fulfil the changing needs of individuals. This concept is essential to an understanding of the colonists' dissatisfaction with the effort of the Niger project administration to reproduce artificially a static model of their traditional social structure. This can also be seen in their reaction to a changed supernatural order; an analysis which failed to descend beneath the level of form would miss the significant fact that their psychological response to religion and the basic premises of their theology have remained unaffected by an "Islamization" which amounts to little more than adopting certain new propitiatory usages.

Apparently not understanding the interrelationship of cultural institutions and the sanctions which give them meaning, the administration of the Niger Irrigation Project sought to modify the Mossi organization of economic activity without referring to the traditional values to which it is vitally related. Seeming to regard the indigenous culture as little more than a compendium of savage rites upon which superior European usages need only be imposed in order to prevail, such an approach reveals a failure to comprehend both the complexity and the tenacity of the Mossi cultural heritage.

592 The compound, from an intellectual point of view, is a kind of subfamily. It is not the whole family; it is not the equivalent of the total family. It is, however, quite superior to the single household.

592 If the Mossi family of Yatenga were completely communal and perfectly integrated, the 100 or 125 persons or so who make up a Mossi family would live and work together. A less marked but still quite appreciable degree of community would exist if the compound were a tight economic unit (this does occur among many blacks of the /French/ Sudan, especially among the Bobo /230/ of the Residency of Léo, the Menkiéra, the Nounouma /Nunuma/, the Kassonfra /Awuna/, etc., and also among the Samo of Yatenga as we shall see later), with all the people who live in it working and consuming together under the authority and guidance of the head of the home. Actually, there is even more disintegration of the family among our Mossi of Yatenga. In each home there are work groups which vary in number according to the importance of the compound and the number of its occupants.

592 Work groups. —We must proceed to the work group, then, in order to deal with the actual economic unit. This group has the communal fields which are not, therefore, properly speaking, familial fields or even subfamilial fields. They belong to a subordinate unit. It is the head of the work group who supplies food for all the people in his group during the greater part of the year (seven months out of twelve). In return, they owe him the larger part of their time during the rainy season (two days out of three) but little work during the dry season. Each member of the group also has his own little field which he cultivates on the third day, as we shall see later on.

592 Consumption. Meals. —People do not assemble for meals in the same fashion during the rainy season as during the dry season.

During the rainy season the members of each work group eat together at noon in the fields, but men and women are always apart. The boys eat with the men, the girls and small children with the women. In the evening they gather for meals in the same manner as during the dry season.

During the dry season the members of each compound, the whole zaka, eat together, but they are divided into several groups. First, there is the basic division between men and women. Then, if the compound is a large one, there are on the male side the groupings of old men, married men, and young unmarried men. There are also three groups on the female side: old women, married women,

592 and young girls. Thus, there are six groups altogether, but we must
264 add that when the women do not get along well, each one eats in her own hut with her own children. In the smaller compounds, there cannot be six groups; there are only two basic ones, that of the men and that of the women.

592 For the preparation of food during the seven months when millet
252 furnished by the head of the work group is eaten, or in other words the millet from the communal fields (roughly from April to October), each woman is "on duty" for 24 hours and cooks for the whole group. The other women help her, of course, by fetching water, pounding millet for her, etc. During the five months when the millet from the small private fields is eaten (November-March), each woman prepares her husband's food. When a husband has several wives, they take turns preparing the food.

592 /231/ As we can see, the manner of preparing meals follows the
252 schedule of millet consumption. While the communal grain distributed
264 by the head of the work group or under his supervision is being consumed, cooking is done on a work group basis. During the time when the millet from household fields is being consumed, the preparation of meals is on a household basis. The actual consumption of the meals, however (except when people are working in the fields) involves a larger community, that of the compound. There remains, however, the basic division between men and women, who must not eat together and who always split into two groups at mealtime. In the larger compounds, moreover, each of these two major groups is further divided into subgroups according to natural age lines. Finally, to cap it all, the female spirit of anarchy sometimes causes some of the women to withdraw. Hence, for the consumption and preparation of food as well as for its production, there exists only this very unstable community which is characteristic of the family we are studying.

592 Exceptions.—We come now to the Mossi household, which we
182 shall discuss at some length. Before doing so, however, it must be stated that the family as we have just described it has its exceptions here and there.

First, there are exceptions in the sense of community, in the sense of integration; above all, there are exceptions in the sense of greater disintegration.

596 In the sense of integration, we must mention primarily the families
592 of great chiefs. For example, there is the family of Gombiraogo, a
182 former Baloum Naba, a very wealthy and important personage. He
591 has five brothers. Two of them live together in the village of Kalo and another two, similarly, in the village of Bembéla. Gombiraogo lives in Ouahigouya with the fifth brother. With this brother he has three zaka where 70 or 80 people live, all of whom work for him and form a single work group under his direction (that is to say, during the rainy season they work for him two days out of three, and during the dry season they do so only when he has exceptional need of them; in return, he provides them with food seven months out of twelve, according to custom, and does not provide them with clothes unless they are unmarried).

What should be noted here is the strength of this work group (70 to 80 people). As a result, it includes several compounds, while it is the compound as a rule that contains several or at least two work groups.

545 The present Baloum Naba, the prime minister, likewise has two zaka working for him. Moreover, the total family of the Baloum Naba is not assembled in Ouahigouya but scattered throughout Yatenga.

543 In the same connection, the Rassam Naba has a zaka of 157 people who form a single work group under his direction. In return, he provides them with food all year.

/232/ Again, there is a zaka of shoemakers at Ouahigouya which
294 includes nearly 100 people altogether, among them 15 or 20 full-
592 grown men, all of them shoemakers. They all work for the zakasoba,
182 who provides them all with food. This zaka, of exceptional numerical strength, is at the same time completely integrated.

596 At the other end of the scale, we find the Mossi family of Yatenga
182 evolving toward complete disintegration in certain parts of the terri-
592 tory, that is to say, evolving toward a state of affairs where nothing remains except the total family on the one hand and the single household on the other (that is, the compound has only a single household).

Thus, in the course of a journey through the canton of Ratenga, I noted in the village of Tangué a family of 110 persons distributed among 14 homes. This gives an average of only seven or eight persons per home. In Kargo (another village) there are five Mossi families for 22 homes sheltering 181 persons, or only eight persons per home.

596 182 592 Here the zaka is quite clearly reduced to the single household, which becomes identified at the same time with the compound and with the work group. Let us state, however, that in the whole of Ratenga there are 4, 637 Mossi for 458 compounds, or ten persons per compound. An average of ten people per compound represents slightly more than a single household (which averages six persons in Yatenga), but not as much as two households. This means that the compounds sometimes contain two households, sometimes only one. Thus, since there are only a few people in each zaka, there is but a single work group.

162 592 621 Here is a complete numerical breakdown of the canton of Ratenga.

Villages	Inhabitants	Compounds	Average per Compound
Napalra	254	20	13
Ouembatenga	61	5	12
Alaga	335	22	15
Boulounga	197	23	9
Bani	387	30	13
Singuitenga	248	18	14
Boudé	69	11	6
Foulgo-Koquin	22	5	4
Zomkalga	88	12	7
Momoné	86	10	9
Toïsi	100	13	8
Denian	4	1	4
Pinsi	145	13	11
Dologa	110	15	7
Kiédéwendé	103	10	10
/233/ Koundi-Bittou	63	9	7
Yalka	56	4	14
Koumbango	221	19	12
Kourpellé	167	15	11
Zimtenga	307	39	8
Battenga	94	11	9
Badnoro	83	10	8
Douré	96	6	16
Yalgatenga	45	8	6

596 /234/ The kind of family found in the cantons of Ratenga and
592 Tougo is quite similar in type to the family among the Mossi of
●182 Ouagadougou, or in its common types (3) which are characterized by

3. See my Noir du Soudan, pp. 544-553.

the fact that the zaka is identified with the single household, and only the total family and the single household remain.

This leads us to note that the average Mossi family of Yatenga, as we have described it above, is more compact, more communal, more integrated than the Mossi family of Ouagadougou.

182 This results, I believe, from the fact that the primitive element
563 of the population, the Foulsé (the basic element, let us not forget,
592 at Ouagadougou as well as in Yatenga), who are more communal than
596 the Mossi, are still much more numerous in Yatenga than in the Ouagadougou region. While in the latter area the Foulsé blended almost completely with the mass of invaders, in Yatenga they resisted more successfully, did not blend with them, and continued to make up the greater part of the population. In view of these circumstances, they probably exercised considerable influence on the morphology of the Mossi family, just as they gave it their prejudices against the ownership of cattle, etc.

This high proportion of the primitive communal element no doubt caused the structural differences between the Mossi family of the Ouagadougou region and that of Yatenga.

000 Women and the household. —We shall deal now with women and the household. We shall subdivide this section into a number of headings as follows.

1. Promise of marriage.
2. Persons whose consent is required to validate the promise of marriage.
3. Gifts.
4. Celebration and consummation of marriage.
5. Impediments to marriage.
6. Question of virginity.
7. Rights and duties of the husband and wife.
8. Polygamy.
9. Organization of the polygamous household.
10. Women's tasks.
11. The conjugal duty.

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When a young Catholic receives a wife through the mission, he may visit her father and pay the customary respect by giving him kola nuts and brass coins. The father of a mission girl may accept or reject his son-in-law as he sees fit, but formerly he could not defy the power of the missions.

A pagan youth who wishes to marry one of the mission girls has to discuss the matter with the priests and swear publicly that he will become a Christian. Before 1946 the young man had to fulfill his promise or be intimidated by the chief and the missionaries until he relented or fled the district. Today, however, the priests usually abandon their efforts to obtain the conversion of the young men after three months have passed. In some cases the young men take their wives and move to other districts, and return only after the girls have given up Catholicism. Despite the lure of wives from the mission, not many young men become Christians on this account because the Mossi are still concerned primarily with family relationships and the effect that conversion would have on these relationships.

The church's prohibition of polygyny is by far the most serious bar to the spread of Catholicism. Many men do not adopt Catholicism simply because they fear that monogamous marriages would not produce children. Father Paternot (Considine 1954:103) has cited a study purporting to show that Christian Mossi have more children than the pagans, but the ordinary people of the district would not accept the facts he presented. They cite their personal experience to the contrary. Dim Delobson (1934:136), a Mossi converted to Catholicism, states:

> A certain number of Christians of my acquaintance whose wives did not have children during the first years of marriage had recourse to magical practices in order to get children. These simple people thought that although they had an omnipotent God beside them, they could impudently—after all the good priests will not know about it—ask the little, but also powerful gods to grant them some material favors here on earth. When the gods given children were taken for Holy Baptism, they were given Christian names instead of the names of the earth shrines, and they did not wear magical charms which would have indicated to the priest the real state of affairs. Nevertheless, the children were bathed in water to which magical potions were added, and when the mothers went to visit their parents, sacrifices of chickens were given to the benevolent Tengkougas.

The Mossi's strong desire for children is admittedly one of the main reasons for leaving the Catholic Church so that they can take other spouses in addition to barren ones. The church has now belatedly recognized this problem and, knowing that it cannot prevent men from taking plural wives, allows them to come to church but prohibits them from taking the Mass.

Many cultural factors besides the desire for children make polygyny important for the Mossi, and make conversion detrimental to the functioning of their family system. Because of lineage opposition to their conversions, some converts are forced to establish nuclear households—a practice out of harmony with the normal rhythm of Mossi life. The reason for this disharmony is that Mossi women married to Catholics must work alone instead of with

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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595 797 182 co-wives and other women of the extended families. Even the Catholic husbands would not help their wives with household tasks requiring more than one person, nor would they violate tradition by chatting with their wives except at night in their huts. Another factor is that after the Mossi Christian [846] woman has given birth to a child, she follows the traditional custom and goes back to her parents' home to remain there during the two or three years' lactation period. This imposes a great hardship on a Catholic husband because during this time he is left without wife or helpmate. In the extended family household there would have been women to take care of a man's material needs, and his mistresses would have taken care of his sexual needs. The Catholic can and does ask the mission for a young girl to take care of his material needs, but of course she is not expected to satisfy his sexual desires. Obviously this arrangement is not satisfactory, and many Catholic men, [837] with the acquiescence of their wives, keep mistresses. Dim Delobson comments:

> Ouagadougou has a large number of Christians, but does this mean that these people in their love for the church respect all her rules? Alas! there are a large number of Christians who oblige their lawful wives to leave the conjugal couch and make way for the accommodation of mistresses . . . in conformity with the old custom. But this is a subject which is too delicate to discuss further. I only note it in passing: *Noli me tangere* (1934:169).

797 794 Despite the influence of tradition on Mossi Catholics, I feel it would be a mistake to say that the complexity of Catholic dogma is one of the drawbacks to missionary success in this country. One Mossi has already been made a bishop of the Catholic Church, and most of the proselytizing in Manga falls on the two Mossi priests and the five Mossi nuns. Under the supervision of two White Fathers, the Catholic children and adults are acquainted with the dogma and rituals of the church. The festivals are well attended and celebrated with as much pomp as possible. Although the Mass is sung in Latin, the Mossi have adapted some of their traditional tunes to the Mass, and use their own language for prayers and hymns. Catholics observe all the sacraments including Confession—a sacrament which is hazardous from the Mossi point of view, because man must lay bare his innermost thoughts to the priests, who, in the final analysis, are Europeans and thus administrators.

It is true that even the staunchest Catholics in Manga have not abandoned all belief in traditional rituals and religious credos. For example, many Mossi Catholics believe in the existence of sorcerers, but the Catholic Church [754] does not recognize the existence of sorcerers or such evil forces (I have met White Fathers who believe that there are unexplainable psychic and physical phenomena in Africa), and moreover has no way of dealing with them. "But," says Dim Delobson (1934:136), "the Mossi believe so strongly in the power of such entities, that even those converted to Christianity cannot always escape the action of malevolent practitioners." The result is that many Catholics desert the church when they believe that only traditional specialists can help them with personal problems. Catholic families easily aban-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[2] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouagadougou ritual.

During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Poughtiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever possible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his ancestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive presents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri.

The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense* (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anniversary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Poughtoenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's mother was not a central figure in the Tense celebration. Instead, great stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the importance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and association of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably celebrated the Tense as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and the conquered.[8]

In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the celebration of the Tense. It was held sometime before the crops were sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou when the previous year's harvest had been poor.[9] Before setting the date for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

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prepared sauce, and flung them in three directions to the waiting ancestral spirits. He then beseeched the royal spirits, the spirits of former provincial ministers, and the spirits of the ancient people (the Ninisi) to grant a long life to the Mogho Naba and peace to all the Mossi. He repeated the ritual with three morsels of meat and with the contents of a pot of beer. When he had finished, the Gande Naba picked up the food thrown to the ancestors and carried it away. He did not look backward for fear that he should see the ancestors and die as a result. The departure of the Gande Naba was the signal for the palace retainers to rush toward the food. They seized and ate what they could, spilling and wasting a good deal in the process.[8]

Meanwhile, chiefs and headmen held similar ceremonies in every district, village, hamlet, and compound in the Ouagadougou kingdom. District and village chiefs offered sacrifices to their ancestors in the name of their subjects. The sacrifices on the hamlet and compound level were more specific. Every grown man had to take a sheep, goat, or chicken to his elder and request that it be offered to the ancestors in his name. The elder sacrificed the animal and beseeched the ancestors to grant the petitioner good health, bountiful crops, and many children during the coming year. The women and children did not take part in the ritual, but they did participate in the general feasting that followed.

The festivities of the Tense lasted only a few days in the districts and villages, but in the capital it did not end officially until about four weeks had elapsed. At the end of this period, the Larhalle Naba gave the Mogho Naba all the cords that had been used to mark the coming of the Tense. A few days later, the chief Tengsoba of Guillingou, the native village of Oubri's mother, and the Tengsobadamba of other important ceremonial centers, visited the Mogho Naba in the palace courtyard. Here they all sacrificed white cocks and placed the blood and feathers of their victims on their ceremonial axes in order to "increase the power" of these objects. Later on, they were given cooked mutton, millet cakes, and other presents. Their departure for home later in the day marked the close of the Tense.

The religio-political function of the Tense is quite explicit, despite the statement by Dim Delobson, himself a Mossi chief (but also a convert to Catholicism), that "it is apparent that this festival has no outstanding features. Its sole aim is to make peace between the living and the dead, and, in the process, to allow everyone to enjoy the food."[9] Judging by the reports of old men who participated in the festival before it was banned, the people did have a good time and enjoyed the food. What is important, however, is that like the Basgha, the Tense served not only "to make peace

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between the living and the dead," but also to strengthen the political bonds between the Mogho Naba and his chiefs, down to the humblest elder of a Mossi compound.

In addition to the Basgha and Tense, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou appears to have offered another yearly sacrifice to Tenga. Each year, after the Basgha, the Mogho Naba, the Baloum Naba, and a large entourage reportedly visited a large earth shrine called Tantibo in the vicinity of Sabatenga to offer propitiatory sacrifices in the name of all the people. When the royal party arrived at Sabatenga, they were joined by the Sabatenga Naba and his Tengsoba. The group proceeded to the foot of the sacred hill, and here the monarch dismounted, took off his bonnet and shoes, and climbed the hill. He made the customary Mossi salute at the shrine and looked on silently while the Tengsoba sacrificed animals and poured libations of millet beer and millet water in supplication for the health and prosperity of the Mogho Naba and all his people.[1]

When evil befell Mossi country in spite of the annual sacrifices to the ancestors and to the earth deity, the Mogho Naba had to offer additional sacrifices. If the country was plagued by drought, the ruler went to an earth shrine in Ouagadougou itself, called "Kom be paspanga" (literally, "water is strong there"), for a sacrifice. Moreover, he might order all his district and village chiefs to perform similar sacrifices to the earth shrines within their territories. In Nobere district, for instance, the district chief went to the village called Barkago, where, standing barefoot and bareheaded on the hilly shrine known as Beta, he ordered the local village chief and the Tengsoba to offer sacrifices for rain and good health.

It is generally believed by the Mossi that when the French attacked Ouagadougou, the deposed Mogho Naba Wobogo made sacrifices to earth shrines. Tradition has it that he sacrificed a black cock, a black ram, a black donkey, and a black slave on a large hill near the White Volta River, beseeching the earth goddess to drive the French away and to destroy the traitor Mazi whom they had placed upon the throne. When Mazi died, the Mossi people believed that he had received his just deserts from the earth shrine for treason. The French believe that Mazi was poisoned.[2]

The district and village chiefs, like the Mogho Naba, were required to make propitiatory sacrifices to the earth shrines on behalf of their subjects. Before taking office, a district chief was ritually shown the major earth shrines in his territory, and he could not ignore their existence and their need for sacrifices. In a country with major local variations in rainfall and localized animal and human epidemics, the Tengsobadamba of stricken areas always called upon the local chiefs to help them propitiate disgruntled spirits.

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

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ity in local matters, even though the Indigénat had been abolished. They adjudicated minor offenses committed in their territories or referred to them on appeal by the districts and villages. They attempted to settle family quarrels and commercial cases, and ordered that restitution be made in cases of theft. However, they had to send any difficult case or major crime up the hierarchy until it reached the officials authorized to deal with it.

The French administrators also continued to act as intermediaries between the large commercial enterprises in Ouagadougou who wished to recruit men for labor or to buy local produce and enterprises in the larger Mossi towns. Thus, if a private firm in Ouagadougou wanted men to work on the roads, it asked the *chef de poste* (administrator) of a region to tell the district chiefs that its representatives would come to recruit men on a certain date. If a large business was planning to canvass a certain area in order to buy shea nuts, it asked the local administrators to notify the chiefs. No one was ever quite certain whether these activities were legal, but no one questioned them. The *chefs de poste* might simply have been giving the people information that they could not have obtained by any other means.

The Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, like the supreme chiefs of the other Mossi regions, continued to perform both the administrative role assigned to him by the colonial government and his traditional politico-ceremonial role. He was partly responsible, through his active cooperation with the administration, for the rapidity with which the Upper Volta became a functioning entity. For example, in his anxiety to make his capital worthy of being the territory's administrative center, he gave his full support to the extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. But he always succeeded in giving the impression (to foreigners at least) of detachment and dissociation from the French administration. His behavior was quite different when he functioned as Mogho Naba of the Ouagadougou Mossi. The following is a brief description of a visit he made to one of the districts:

> The Mogho Naba arrived unexpectedly at the district chief's headquarters, where no preparations had been made for his visit. It appears that he was on a tour of his domains to consult with the local chiefs about the forthcoming elections, and had simply dropped in to visit the district chief. However, as soon as his presence became known around the district, important village chiefs and the heads of lineages all put on their robes and appeared to pay homage to him. Meanwhile, he was consulting with his host. But as soon as the conversation was over he came out into the compound, where he was saluted by the chief's Bendere, who praised the royal ancestors by reciting

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175 643 639 574 182 their genealogies and traditions. The Mogho Naba was pleased by the recitation and thanked the drummer.

Later that day, the Mogho Naba presented himself in the courtyard of the district chief's compound to be saluted by the village chiefs and by the heads of lineages. They came to him in the traditional way, rubbing their palms and bending their foreheads to the ground. He addressed them, and in response they snapped their fingers in the customary manner. Then, one by one, the village chiefs and the lineage elders came to their monarch and gave him presents of money which ranged from 50 to 200 francs. The Mogho Naba paid little attention to the sums given, being more interested in this act of homage and fealty. However, he listened carefully as each donor announced his name and rank within the official hierarchy or village. He later thanked them collectively and departed. This ceremony, while not very elaborate, differed little in detail from those characteristic of the traditional Mossi's relationship to their Mogho Naba. The new element here was that the monarch was traveling around his domain, establishing a close relationship with his chiefs and subjects, whose support he needed for his modern political alliances.[23]

*175 643 796 182 [692] The Mogho Naba continued to hold the morning ceremony at court, even though it was rapidly losing its traditional function and becoming of major interest only to visitors. He also continued to hold those ceremonies associated with individual appointments to the nam and with traditional sacrifices. Unknown to many was the fact that traditional authorities at court still judged legal cases which many Mossi refused to take to the Europeans.

*175 645 182 In contrast to the Mogho Naba, the traditional provincial ministers now lost most of the power they had held in the pre-conquest period, and all the duties they had acquired in the immediate post-conquest era. As we have seen, one minister, the Baloum Naba, had entered politics at the suggestion of the Mogho Naba, but even he was now relegated to the entourage that accompanied the Mogho Naba and the European administrators on visits to the ministers' former provinces. The increased number of European administrators had made these ministers superfluous.

*178 175 554 634 [692] The district chiefs retained some prestige after the war. They could still judge legal cases, with the understanding that the litigants were free to go to the Europeans if they so desired and had to be sent there in serious cases. Their major problem was that a more efficient administration was taking a greater interest in district affairs. For the first time since the conquest, officials were visiting some of the more remote villages. No longer were they said to "act as locusts"—that is, to appear periodically to garner supplies and men from the districts and then disappear until the next onslaught. Instead, they appeared regularly to collect taxes and to take censuses, and

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The proposed constitution thus negated any claims of the traditional chiefs over any section of the Voltaic population. Henceforth, the only leaders of the Voltaic people were to be their elected representatives. The constitution did not even mention the traditional chiefs, and no provision was made to give them a special voice in the government. By its silence on these matters, the constitution had reduced the Mossi chiefs to the status of ordinary citizens. Certain parts of this constitution were later changed, but not the sections dealing with the democratic nature of the emerging state. The power of the chiefs was gone. Yaméogo, who had been a commoner among the Mossi of Koudougou, was given the title of "President of the Republic" by what had now become the National Assembly. It was he who traveled to and from Paris with Houphouët-Boigny and the other members of the Conseil de l'Entente, an organization comprising Dahomey, the Ivory Coast, Niger, and the Upper Volta, to parley for the independence of the Upper Volta; and it was he who traveled around the country explaining his policies. Yaméogo did not belabor the issue of the chiefs, but he declared quite firmly that "the days of devotion to certain little Voltaic saints" were over. "Now must begin the era of the cult of the Upper Volta, next only to that of God."[80]

France finally agreed that the Upper Volta should become independent on August 5, 1960, just 64 years after the conquest. However, sovereignty and power were not to be transferred to those from whom it had been wrested originally. Mogho Naba Kougri was only a spectator at the National Assembly when Yaméogo, praising Houphouët-Boigny and General de Gaulle, announced the coming of independence; and he was only a spectator when the Assembly ratified the independence agreement on July 27, 1960. The President said on that occasion that "Independence is not an end in itself, but a beginning. In effect, from now on we are called upon to assume full responsibility for our destiny."[81] He added that changes in the country would be brought about "in cooperation with the elected representatives, the party [RDA], and the youth organizations." He made no mention of the chiefs, and in fact the only chiefs who played any role during this period did so as politicians. The chiefs were to be honored only on Independence Day, when the President, in a spirit of benevolence, gave thanks to all those who had played a role in recovering the dignity of "Voltaic Man," including not only the French professors, the clergy, the war veterans, and the politicians, but also the "traditional chiefs who safeguarded the integrity of our state against external attack."[82]

The government of the Upper Volta Republic decided to allow the institution of chieftainship to fade away by preventing the election of new

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chiefs. The Mogho Naba continued to receive a yearly stipend from the government, and local chiefs were still respected by the older people and by the more tradition-minded youths. Nevertheless, the drive toward the elimination of chiefly status in the Upper Volta went on. In January 1962, government decrees prohibited "the wearing of any costume or headgear indicating the status of chief or slave";[33] thus, the remaining Mossi chiefs are to be unrecognizable as such outside their own villages and districts. The chiefs, for their part, seem to have become reconciled to their fate. Many of their young relatives are joining the growing ranks of the new politicians.

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000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son. [174]

20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II. [182]

22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569-70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers. [838]

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles. [648] [762] [797]

25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue. [114]

26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives. [563]

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach. [824]

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov- [648]